

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Amended) A gift certificate service system for managing sales, gifting, and usage of electronic gift certificates according to a request by a user's communication terminal through a wired/wireless network,
5 comprising:

a gift certificate service server for managing purchase, gifting, and usage operations on the electronic gift certificates from the communication terminal;

10 a gift certificate database, accessed to the gift certificate service server, for storing electronic gift certificate information, and processing a reply to an inquiry of electronic gift certificate usage from the gift certificate service server; and

15 a network server, accessed to the gift certificate service server and accessed to the user's communication terminal through the wired/wireless network, for performing a client interface function on the purchase, gifting, and usage on the electronic gift certificates, and transmitting the user's gift certificate purchase particulars and gift certificate information for usage of the corresponding gift certificate to the communication terminal.

20 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift certificate service server comprises:

means for receiving a user's purchase request from the communication terminal;

means for checking a settlement state of the electronic gift certificate bought by the user;

means for settling the electronic gift certificate bought by the user, and issuing the bought electronic gift certificate to the user, when the user requests settlement;

5 means for storing the issued gift certificate information in the gift certificate database; and

means for notifying the user of the gift certificate purchase particulars in a message format.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the gift certificate service server comprises:

10 means for receiving a user's gifting request from the communication terminal;

means for inquiring an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user of the gift certificate database, and determining the existence state;

15 means for receiving information on the gift certificate to be gifted and a transferee when the user's gift certificate is found;

means for transmitting the gift certificate selected by the user to the transferee;

20 means for updating the user's gift certificate information, storing the updated information in the gift certificate database together with the transferee's gift certificate information; and

means for notifying the user of the gift certificate gifting information in the message format.

4. The system of claim 1, comprising:

means for receiving the user's usage request from the communication terminal;

means for inquiring the gift certificate database of an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user, and determining the existence state;

means for settling the price with the gift certificate and determining whether the settlement is possible;

means for allowing the usage of the gift certificate to process the settlement on the price information when the settlement is possible;

means for settling the user's gift certificate information, updating the settlement information, and storing the updated information in the gift certificate database; and

means for notifying the user of the gift certificate usage information in the message format.

5. . (Amended) An electronic gift certificate circulating method for a gift certificate service system including a gift certificate database and a gift certificate service server to manage sales of the electronic gift certificates according to requests by a communication terminal through wired and wireless networks, comprising:

20 (a) receiving a user's purchase request from the communication terminal;

(b) checking a settlement state of the electronic gift certificate bought by the user;

(c) settling the electronic gift certificate bought by the user, and

issuing the bought electronic gift certificate to the user, when the user requests settlement;

(d) storing the issued gift certificate information in the gift certificate database; and

5 (e) notifying the user of the gift certificate purchase particulars and gift certificate information for usage of the corresponding gift certificate in a message format.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising: checking the user's membership authentication state.

10 7. The method of claim 5, wherein in (a), the purchase request includes information on a category of the gift certificates desired by the user, a price, and a number of sheets.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein in (c), the settlement price of the bought electronic gift certificate is summed with the user's communication terminal usage fee, and the summed price and fee are then settled.

15 9. The method of claim 5, wherein in (e), the message format includes the SMS (short message service) format and the MMS (multimedia message service) format.

10. (Amended) An electronic gift certificate circulating method for a gift certificate service system including a gift certificate database and a gift certificate service server to manage gifting of the electronic gift certificates according to requests by a communication terminal through wired and wireless networks, comprising:

(a) receiving a user's gifting request from the communication

terminal;

(b) inquiring an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user of the gift certificate database, and determining the existence state;

5 (c) receiving information on the gift certificate to be gifted and a transferee when the user's gift certificate is found;

(d) transmitting the gift certificate selected by the user to the transferee;

10 (e) updating the user's gift certificate information, storing the updated information in the gift certificate database together with the transferee's gift certificate information; and

(f) notifying the user of the gift certificate gifting information in the message format.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising: checking the user's membership authentication state between (a) and (b), and

15 further comprising: performing a gift certificate buying process when the user has no gift certificate in (b).

12. The method of claim 10, further comprising: determining whether an additional gift to be transmitted together with the gift certificate is provided, and receiving corresponding information when the additional gift is found according to the determination, after (c), and

20 transmitting the gift certificate and the additional gift to the transferee in (d).

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the additional gift includes a bell sound, a theme card, background music, and a character.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein in (f), the message format includes the SMS (short message service) format and the MMS (multimedia message service) format.

15. (Amended) An electronic gift certificate circulating method for a gift certificate service system including a gift certificate database and a gift certificate service server to manage usage of the electronic gift certificates according to requests by a communication terminal through wired and wireless networks, comprising:

(a) receiving the usage request of a gift certificate selected by the user from among the gift certificate information stored in the communication terminal from the communication terminal;

(b) inquiring the gift certificate database of an existence state of the gift certificate possessed by the user, and determining the existence state;

(c) settling the price with the gift certificate and determining whether the settlement is possible;

(d) allowing the usage of the gift certificate to process the settlement on the price information when the settlement is possible;

(e) settling the user's gift certificate information, updating the settlement information, and storing the updated information in the gift certificate database; and

(f) notifying the user of the gift certificate usage information in the message format.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising: checking the user's membership authentication state between (a) and (b), and

further comprising: performing a gift certificate buying process when the user has no gift certificate in (b).

17. The method of claim 15, wherein in (f), the message format includes the SMS (short message service) format and the MMS (multimedia message service) format.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein in (a), the usage request is transmitted from the user's mobile communication terminal.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the mobile communication terminal has a credit card function therein.

10 20. The method of claim 15, wherein in (a), the usage request is transmitted from a chain store's card terminal according to a card usage by the user.

15 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the user's card is a membership card for membership authentication by service providers including a communication service provider and a distribution company.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the user's card is a brand card.

20 23. The method of claim 15, wherein in (a), the usage request is transmitted from an online shop when the user buys a desired product at the online shop including an online shopping mall and requires an online settlement using the gift certificate.

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